

This letter, concerning the recent certification of 1000 braceros for Salinas Strawberries, has been sent to:

Senator Hiram Fong
Senator Robert Kennedy
Senator Edward Kennedy
Senator George Murphy
Senator Harrison Williams

Senator Wayne Morse
Congressman Adam Clayton Powell
Congressman James Roosevelt
Congressman Philip Burton
Congressman Hawkins

Congressman Don Edwards

We request that you write to these and/or other public officials immediately, to ask their help in bringing about a Congressional investigation of the labor situation in Santa Clara County, and a reversal of Mr. Wirtz' decision.

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The United Farm Workers is unconditionally opposed to the recent certification by Willard Wirtz for 1000 braceros for Salinas Strawberries, Inc., Salinas, California. We ask you to aid us in reversing the decision in spite of the fact that both Albert Tieberg, California State Director of Employment, and Governor Edmund Brown, approved the request. The reasons are as follows:

- 1) Twice the United Farm Workers, main office in San Jose, California, has offered to furnish workers to Salinas Strawberries, Inc., once in April, and once on May 10, by telephone, if the workers were protected by negotiated contracts. Both offers were refused.
- 2) Although last year several hundred workers were sent daily from San Jose by bus to the Watsonville and Salinas areas, (maximum over 1000 workers), Mr. Vukasovich refused buses for San Jose this year.
- 3) Although we praise his efforts to obtain family housing in Salinas, his exorbitant rates of \$7.00 per day (\$210 per month) could in no way be construed as encouraging families to come to Salinas.
- 4) Failure to respect farm worker dignity by refusing even to negotiate with a bona-fide farm worker organization.
- 5) Failure to use all available techniques to recruit needed workers.

The United Farm Workers respectfully asks what sort of war on poverty we are running in this country? Growers are willing to make contracts with workers in Mexico, but not with workers 60 miles away. They and Willard Wirtz are encouraging a serious unemployment problem, and all the poverty effects this produces, here in the Santa Clara County - Salinas Areas.

Farm workers and potential farm workers, request your help now, in the form of on-the-spot Congressional investigation in the county.

Sincerely,
Oscar Gonzalez, President
United Farm Workers
P. O. Box 3102
San Jose, California
May 17, 1966

Farm Union Chief Here Hits U.S. OK on Braceros

The decision to supply 1,000 braceros to Salinas Strawberries was a blow to the war on poverty in Santa Clara County, declared president Oscar Gonzalez of the United Farm Workers Union last night.

"What's the use of spending millions to fight poverty here when the government goes to Mexico and Guam to get foreign help?" he asked. Guamanians are working in the Imperial Valley, Gonzalez said.

"What do we farm workers have to do in our country, go to Mexico so we can get a contract with Salinas Strawberries?"

With braceros headed for the strawberry fields, wages for pea pickers have dropped to four

cents a pound, Gonzalez observed. He added some workers are making only \$6 a day in Hollister.

Salinas Strawberries might have had enough help if it had been willing to sign a contract with the UFW for 500 workers, the union chief indicated.

He said the union contacted Salinas Strawberries president Bud Vukasovich twice, but the grower refused to discuss a contract.

Gov. Brown's announcement "surprised" Gonzalez because he told the UFW in a San Jose appearance last month he would help the farm workers in California, whether re-elected or not, according to the union chief.

San Jose News

May 13-66

Picking Plan Hit By Union

The United Farm Workers is unconditionally opposed to the request by Salinas Strawberries for 1,000 braceros, Oscar Gonzalez, president of the UFW in Santa Clara County said today.

Gonzalez said he has asked Secy. of Labor Willard Wirtz, Gov. Brown and others not to certify the Salinas Strawberries request.

REFUSED TALK

"Twice before the UFW office in San Jose has offered to furnish workers to Salinas," Gonzalez said, "but Salinas Strawberries refused to talk about a contract for the farm workers."

He said the contacts were made by telephone in April and May.

"Our stand is we must have a contract to work," Gonzalez said.

"If Salinas Strawberries is willing to negotiate for braceros in Mexico they should be willing to negotiate for a contract for the union," he said.

Gonzalez scoffed at reports that Salinas Strawberries has made "an all-out effort to recruit workers in Texas without success."

He said no one would go to Salinas to work for \$1.40 an hour when Salinas Strawberries charges the "exorbitant rate of \$7 a day for family housing."

\$210 MONTHLY

"That's \$210 a month for rent," Gonzalez said. "Quite a bit to pay when a man works eight hours a day, seven days a week at \$1.40 an hour."

Gonzalez said that Salinas Strawberries fails to respect the farm worker's dignity by refusing to even negotiate with bona fide workers in the coastal area.

He said that Albert Teaberg, director of state employment, may consider the Salinas Strawberries case closed, but "as far as the UFW is concerned it's still open."

"We want justice for the farm worker," Gonzalez said.

San Jose Mercury

May 14-66

Salinas Gets Its Braceros

Mercury Sacramento Bureau

SACRAMENTO — The federal government has approved a request by Salinas Strawberries Inc. for 1,000 Mexican nationals, Gov. Edmund G. Brown announced Friday.

The governor praised Labor Secretary Willard Wirtz for his prompt okay of the Monterey County firm's plea for braceros.

"The speed with which the department of labor acted is good news for California agriculture," Brown said. "It shows that when growers meet the standards the department will meet the needs."

The State Department of Employment supported the request for braceros on the basis that Salinas Strawberries had tried to recruit sufficient workers and failed. Brown said Friday that Wirtz's action will "prevent an extensive strawberry crop loss during the nearing peak of the 1966 season."

Use of the Mexican nationals will be allowed for six weeks. Brown pointed out that Salinas Strawberries meets the minimum wage standard of \$1.40 that Wirtz has insisted must be paid before the federal government will allow import of braceros under the general immigration law.

The department of Employment's action in backing the request earlier this week drew protests from farm worker unions, which contended that Salinas Strawberries had not made sufficient effort to recruit domestic labor.

Last year Salinas Strawberries hauled bus loads of workers to the fields from San Jose.

San Jose News

May 12, 1966

State Backs Up Plea For Berry Braceros

News Sacramento Bureau

SACRAMENTO — The State Department of Employment today backed a request by Salinas Strawberries for 1,000 Mexican

braceros.

Salinas Strawberries, the world's largest strawberry grower, asked for the braceros last week through the Farm Labor Association of Salinas.

State Employment Director Albert B. Tieburg said he had forwarded the application to Labor Secretary W. Willard Wirtz. Tieburg said that Salinas Strawberries is paying the guaranteed minimum wage of \$1.40 an hour which Wirtz requires before he will permit import of foreign workers under the general immigration law.

Many workers in the Salinas area are earning "substantially more" than the \$1.40 minimum through piece-rate wages, Tieburg said.

In a letter to Glenn E. Brockway, Labor Department regional director in San Francisco, Tieburg said Salinas Strawberries had offered "many inducements and accommodations in a so far vain effort to attract sufficient American workers."

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